

United States Department of the Interior

United States–Mexico Border Field Coordinating Committee

Strategic Plan 1999–2002



Guardians of the Past, Stewards for the Future

Mission Statement: United States–Mexico Border Field Coordinating Committee

The mission of the United States–Mexico Border Field Coordinating Committee is to encourage appropriate and joint involvement among various United States and Mexican government offices to address border natural and cultural resource issues, and to provide means for consultations with Mexican counterparts. Specifically, the committee identifies and facilitates opportunities to communicate and coordinate at regional, state, and field levels between and among Department of the Interior bureaus and offices and between the field and headquarters offices on border natural and cultural issues.

Introduction to the Field Coordinating Committee

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Field Coordinating Committee (FCC) is to promote, facilitate, and enhance communication and coordination between and among member bureaus and offices with respect to United States–Mexico border environmental issues of Department of the Interior (DOI) interest and concern. Through this enhanced communication and coordination, the committee helps develop consistent DOI policies, strategies, plans, programs, and priorities and encourages their development by other federal agencies for addressing the resource conservation and socioeconomic concerns of the border region. This effort requires close and constant coordination between the Field Coordinating Committee and state, tribal, and local governments concerning programs, projects, and activities affecting the border area.

ORGANIZATION

The Field Coordinating Committee, which was chartered in August 1994, consists of seven bureaus within the Department of the Interior — the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Minerals Management Service, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey. Each bureau has a designated field representative and one or more

alternates who serve on the committee. The regional environmental officers of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and San Francisco, California, are ex officio members of the committee as is a Washington representative from the Office of the Secretary of the Interior.

No full-time equivalents have been assigned to the committee. Participation by bureau personnel is in addition to the other duties of their positions. The Field Coordinating Committee is not funded through a separate federal appropriation. All expenses are borne by the participating bureaus. It is anticipated that the long-term goals presented in this strategic plan will be accomplished through the bureaus' current and future contributions and participation.

The Field Coordinating Committee accomplishes its fieldwork on the border through intradepartmental issue teams made up of field experts from the bureaus that have a specific jurisdiction, special expertise, or bona fide interest in the issue. For example, multibureau issue teams are working in the areas of environmental education, research and management of shared water resources, aerial photography and resource mapping, Tohono O'odham resource protection, United States–Mexico "sister" protected areas, and habitat restoration efforts, to name a few.

Long-term Goals and Action Plans

For this plan, the Field Coordinating Committee has developed five long-term strategic goals. Performance measures in the conventional meaning are not appropriate. The successes of the committee will be realized in the on-the-ground achievements of the field units of the respective bureaus.

For each goal there is an action plan that details what actions are necessary to accomplish the long-term goal and establishes a timetable and a responsible party. These goals, actions, and assigned responsibilities were developed to create linkages to each bureau's current strategic plan as applicable. In this way, the achievement of the committee's long-term goals will contribute to the accomplishment of the participating bureaus' strategic plans as well as to the achievement of the Department of the Interior's strategic plan.

COMMUNICATIONS GOAL

The Field Coordinating Committee effectively communicates information on border natural and cultural resource issues.

Explanation: Good communication is essential to good natural and cultural resource management. The Field Coordinating Committee represents DOI bureaus' interests along the border and coordinates comments and input for documents related to the border. Committee members have responsibility for communicating information within their individual bureaus and to a variety of

outside sources. Thus, it is important that all border field office personnel be given opportunities to become familiar with and understand border issues and the Field Coordinating Committee's organization, mission, and accomplishments. Personnel in other federal, state, tribal, and local government offices, Mexico, academia, non-government organizations, and interested individuals along the border also need to become familiar with committee activities and responsibilities. Table 1 identifies actions through which the committee believes it can improve communications on border natural and cultural resource issues by the year 2002.

TABLE 1: ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS

Action	Responsibility	Timetable
1. Develop and maintain a bilingual World Wide Web page of Field Coordinating Committee information with appropriate "hot links" to bureau web pages.		
a. Develop web page information and submit it to editor/translator.	Each committee member and issue team	March 1, 1999
b. Edit and translate information received into Spanish and submit it to web page manager.	NPS	June 1, 1999
c. Provide information to main web page.	Each committee member	At least every 6 months
d. Edit and translate information received into Spanish and submit it to web page manager.	NPS	At least every 6 months
e. Maintain web page.	USGS	At least every 6 months
2. Establish and maintain a mailing list.		
a. Invite DOI or bureau public relations person to attend Field Coordinating Committee meeting to make recommendations on extent of mailing list.	Co-chairs	FY99
b. Develop mailing list.	Co-chairs	FY99
3. Inform border field office personnel so that they become familiar with the Field Coordinating Committee's organization, mission, border issues, and accomplishments.	Each committee member	Ongoing
4. Obtain comments and input from DOI border field offices for public documents related to DOI and border issues such as the annual Good Neighbor Environmental Board Report and annual Border XXI reports.	Each committee member	Ongoing
5. Communicate important activities of the Field Coordinating Committee		
a. Develop fact sheets, issue papers, informational brochures, videos, and public service announcements that communicate important activities involving the committee.	Committee	As deemed appropriate
b. Invite DOI or bureau public relations person to attend committee or bureau meeting and make recommendations.	Co-chairs	FY99
6. Encourage other federal, state, tribal, and local government offices, Mexico, academia, non-government organizations, and interested public to provide input and comment.	Committee and issue teams	Ongoing

ISSUES GOAL

The Field Coordinating Committee establishes a framework for natural and cultural border resource issues that provides direction for effective actions.

Explanation: The Field Coordinating Committee accomplishes high priority natural and cultural resource tasks and projects by identifying and assessing the most significant, relevant border issues and establishing issue teams to address them. Issue teams are modified or disbanded

when assigned tasks change or have been completed. Each issue team is composed of bureau Field Coordinating Committee members and other parties with an interest in the issue. The issue teams should draw on the expertise of partners within other federal, state, tribal, and local governments, Mexico, academia, nongovernmental organizations, and other stakeholders. Table 2 indicates actions by which the committee can address border issues.

TABLE 2: ACTIONS FOR ADDRESSING BORDER ISSUES

Action	Responsibility	Timetable
1. Establish a process for conducting annual reviews of issue team activities. Reviews will evaluate progress and continuing need for issue team.	Committee	First committee meeting in calendar year 1999
2. Develop criteria for establishing new issue teams and selection of issue team leaders.	Committee	First committee meeting in calendar year 1999
3. Develop a public participation process in which interested stakeholders and partners outside the Field Coordinating Committee can comment on issue team products or contribute directly to issue team activities.	Committee	First committee meeting in calendar year 1999
4. Conduct a comprehensive initial review of issue teams.	Committee	Soon after completion of actions 1-3
5. Conduct an annual review of border natural and cultural resource issues and present an assessment of possible future issues appropriate for consideration. The assessment will become a regular part of annual issue team reviews and reporting of committee accomplishments.	Committee	Begin in FY 2000
6. Consult and form partnerships, as appropriate, with state agencies that are involved in border natural and cultural resource issues.	Committee	Ongoing

LEADERSHIP GOAL

The Field Coordinating Committee is recognized as a leader on border natural and cultural resource issues.

Explanation: Recognition as a leader and support are important for success. This recognition and support must apply both internally (within individual bureaus and the Department of the Interior) and externally (in Congressional delegations, among state, tribal, local, and other federal

government representatives, as well as in Mexico, in academia, in nongovernment organizations, and among other stakeholders). Leadership can be accomplished through the formation of strong partnerships and through improved communication and dissemination of information (also see "Communications Goal"). The actions outlined in table 3 for the Field Coordinating Committee are intended to achieve leadership in preserving and conserving natural and cultural resources along the United States-Mexico border.

TABLE 3: ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE LEADERSHIP IN PRESERVING AND CONSERVING NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Action	Responsibility	Timetable
1. Develop a strategic plan that presents the committee's vision and the goals and actions needed to accomplish its charter.	Committee	March 1, 1999
2. Present at least one major issue to the United States-Mexico binational commission forum.	Co-chairs	Annually
3. Support the United States-Mexico Border States Conference on Recreation, Parks, and Wildlife.	Committee	Annually
4. Develop and provide binational compatible digital geospatial information.	USGS lead	Ongoing
5. Invite senior level bureau managers, such as state and regional directors and/or their deputies, and appropriate field personnel to committee meetings when meeting is held in their region.	Committee	As appropriate
6. Conduct at least one meeting involving Mexican partners.	Committee	Annually
7. Conduct binational letter of intent and Border XXI regional meetings.	Committee	Annually
8. Report committee accomplishments and annual work plan to bureau directors and the Department of the Interior.	Co-chairs	January 1 for previous fiscal year
9. Provide leadership for Border XXI Natural Resources Work Group.	Committee	Ongoing

POLICY GOAL

The Field Coordinating Committee is the recognized forum to provide field input and coordination for DOI policies and priorities along the border.

Explanation: The Field Coordinating Committee is used by the Department of the Interior to accomplish border tasks that need to be expedited. Past examples are the development of the *United States Department of the Interior Criteria and Guidelines for Evaluating Projects and U.S./Mexico Border Activities* for the Border Environment Cooperation Commission and the

natural resource sections of the Border XXI program documents. A most important element in policy development is field level participation. The department also uses the committee to coordinate field input and to coordinate policies and priorities along the border. The actions shown in table 4 will provide a means for improving this relationship. They also will ensure that border policy development and implementation are expedited to the extent possible and communicated at all appropriate levels within the bureaus and the department.

**TABLE 4: ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING BORDER RELATIONSHIPS
AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

Action	Responsibility	Timetable
1. Establish an issue team to develop a process for transferring information on policy and other matters down to field offices and back up through the bureaus and to expedite department and field office requests.	Committee	First committee meeting in calendar year 1999
2. Develop a process for transferring information on policy and make recommendations to Field Coordinating Committee. The process must be acceptable to the leadership in all bureaus and can be implemented by committee members.	Issue team	Six months after establishment
3. Approve and implement the process.	Committee	Following meeting.

RESOURCES GOAL

The Field Coordinating Committee enhances understanding, management, conservation, and protection of shared natural and cultural resources along the United States-Mexico border.

Explanation: As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior, its bureaus, and the Field Coordinating Committee are responsible for the management, conservation, and protection of natural and cultural resources for present and future generations. The Field Coordinating Committee recognizes and is sensitive to the differences between the environ-

mental laws of the United States and Mexico, and the social and economic needs of border communities will be taken into consideration when making decisions.

Most work by Field Coordinating Committee issue teams focuses on natural resource issues; therefore, significant actions relating to this goal are found in the action lists of all five goals. As natural and cultural resource management concerns arise, the formation of new issue teams, such as the Cultural Resources Issue Team or the Data Management Issue Team, may be necessary to effectively address those issues. Some of the work of issue teams is listed in table 5.

TABLE 5: ACTIONS OF FIELD COORDINATING COMMITTEE ISSUE TEAMS

Action	Responsibility	Timetable
1. Assess and characterize the status of border species and habitats to identify areas of binational interest and concern. Resulting products, such as reports on species and habitat status and recommendations, will be used to focus binational resources on opportunities to resolve problems or issues.	Habitat Restoration Issue Team	FY 2002
2. Continue to advise bureau managers to designate funding for border resources work in support of each bureau's mission.	Each committee member	Ongoing
3. Continue to support development and maintenance of Border XXI Natural Resources Work Group environmental indicator databases.	Committee	Ongoing
4. Encourage the development of standards for data and geographic information systems used in border work to ensure compatibility among the DOI bureaus, other agencies, and, to the extent possible, Mexico.	Committee, with USGS lead	Ongoing
5. Document American and Mexican partners interested and involved in identifying, protecting, and managing cultural resources along the United States-Mexico border. a. Catalog projects and sites in which they are active. b. Documentation should include annotated lists of agencies, academic and research institutions, museums, archives, maps, and regularly updated reports.	Cultural Resources Issue Team	First document completed in FY 2000
6. Facilitate professional exchanges to promote cultural research, raise awareness of historic and cultural ties with Mexico, and encourage heritage and cultural tourism as a component of sustainable economic development.	Cultural Resources Issue Team	Ongoing

Current Members of the United States–Mexico Field Coordinating Committee

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Barry Welch, Member
Robert Carolin, Alternate
Amy Heuslein, Alternate

Bureau of Land Management

Beau McClure, Member
Joyce Fierro, Alternate
Jim Renthall, Alternate
Al Stein, Alternate

Bureau of Reclamation

Lorenzo Arriaga, Member
Russell Reichelt, Alternate
Terri Wilson, Alternate

Minerals Management Service

Jim Kendall, Member
Bob Rogers, Alternate

National Park Service

Howard Ness, Member
Alan Cox, Alternate
Larry Norris, Alternate
Ramon Olivas, Alternate

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Charlie Sanchez, Member
Frank Baucom, Alternate

U.S. Geological Survey

John Klein, Member
Denny Buckler, Alternate
Floyd Gray, Alternate
Ken Osborn, Alternate

Ex Officio Members, Department of the Interior

Susan Lieberman Goodwin
Pat Port
Glen Sekavec

Appendix: Charter for Field Coordinating Committee

CHARTER FOR DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR U.S./MEXICO BORDER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES FIELD COORDINATING COMMITTEE

This Charter (hereinafter the "Charter") is made and entered into this 11th day of August, 1994, by and among the bureaus and offices of the Department of the Interior which are signatories to this Charter, for the purpose of promoting, facilitating, and enhancing communication and coordination between and among said bureaus and offices with respect to U.S./Mexico border environmental issues of Departmental interest and concern.

The border region contains nationally significant resource protection areas such as national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, national conservation areas, wilderness areas, biosphere reserves, reservoirs, Outer Continental Shelf, and national interest lands. A myriad of Federal trust species (federally endangered or threatened, migratory birds, some marine mammals) occur in the border area, and their well-being is the responsibility of the Department of the Interior. It also contains extensive Native American reserved lands of great natural and cultural heritage value on both sides of the border. Activities that occur near and adjacent to Federal lands may also have an impact on the natural resources we are charged with managing.

Federal agencies are charged with administering and enforcing national environmental laws throughout the area. Other Federal development programs and projects throughout the area greatly affect the roles and responsibilities of the Department of the Interior along the border.

Thus, it is recognized by the bureaus which are signatories to this Charter that other Federal agencies, Indian Nations, State and local governments, and private organizations may also have a large stake in issues of Departmental concern. As such, they are to be consulted and included, as appropriate, in discussions and resolutions of such issues.

Article I. *Establishment of the Department of the Interior U.S./Mexico Border Environmental Issues Field Coordinating Committee*

A. There is established a Department of the Interior U.S./Mexico Border Environmental Issues Field Coordinating Committee (hereafter the "Committee") comprised of the following bureaus of the Department:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Mines
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- Geological Survey
- Minerals Management Service
- National Biological Survey
- National Park Service

The Regional Environmental Offices of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and San Francisco, California, shall be ex-officio members of this Committee.

Each bureau shall designate their field representative (and alternate) with the approval/support of their Regional/State Directors. The Committee shall meet at least twice yearly. Additional meetings shall be held as determined by the Chair.

B. The purpose of the Committee shall be to encourage appropriate and joint involvement among various bureaus to address border issues. Specifically, the Committee will identify and provide opportunities to communicate and coordinate at Regional, State, and field levels between and among Department of the Interior bureaus and offices and, further, to facilitate and enhance communication between the field and headquarters offices on border issues.

Through enhanced communication and coordination, the Committee will encourage and facilitate the development of consistent Department of the

Interior policies, strategies, plans, programs and priorities, and encourage the development of such by other U.S. Government agencies, for addressing the environmental, conservation, and cultural concerns of the border region.

The overall effort also will require close and constant coordination between the Committee and State, local and tribal governments concerning programs, projects and activities affecting the border area. Additionally, the Committee will develop a mechanism for monitoring the programs, projects, and activities of its member bureaus and offices to further the objectives of ecosystem management, restoration, and maintenance.

To do this, the Committee will:

- ◆ encourage appropriate joint technical and programmatic involvement among various bureaus to address border issues;
- ◆ promote coordination with Mexican counterparts through established agreements and mechanisms;
- ◆ avoid duplication of efforts through reorganized strengths of the various bureaus, improved field coordination and communication of ongoing and planned programs, and promotion of jointly undertaken projects;
- ◆ encourage expedited implementation of programs, projects, and activities included in bureau long and short term plans for environmental protection, restoration, and maintenance of the border area;
- ◆ encourage improved, consistent and coordinated data collection, management, and dissemination;
- ◆ coordinate and communicate with NAFTA related/created institutions (BECC, etc.); and
- ◆ provide for coordinated and comprehensive bureau review, as described in 516 Departmental Manual Chapter 7, of environmental documents prepared by other Federal agencies and circulated under Departmental control number, to support their NAFTA and other U.S./Mexico border related activities.

The Committee will not attempt to replace or duplicate existing and established bureau structures or responsibilities.

Chairperson(s) will be selected by Committee members. Selection shall be by consensus.

It will be the responsibility of the Chairperson(s) to:

- Communicate with appropriate DOI officials in Washington, D.C.;
- Schedule, arrange for, and chair the Committee meetings;
- Prepare and distribute an agenda at least 2 weeks prior to each scheduled meeting; and,
- Ensure that minutes are kept of each meeting and distribute such minutes within 2 weeks following each meeting.

Topics may be added to or deleted from the agenda, and issues will be approved or disapproved during each meeting by consensus of those members in attendance.

The Chairperson(s) shall serve a term of 1 year but may be extended for one subsequent term by consensus of the Committee members.

Location and hosting of meetings will rotate among member bureaus of the Committee.

It will be the responsibility of the bureau representatives to establish a process for greater communication.

Article II. Establishment of Intra-Departmental "Issue Teams"

- A. The purpose of "Issue Teams" shall be to address, study and analyze specific program or problem areas or topics deemed by the Committee to be of critical concern or interest to the Department of the Interior or any of its bureaus. The issue team will make recommendations to the Committee.

From time to time, issues of specific interest to the Department, as differentiated from individual bureaus of the Department, may be assigned through the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget to the Committee for study and analysis.

The issue teams shall have a definite life span. Once the issue to be addressed has been analyzed and recommendations submitted to the Committee, the issue team shall be disbanded.

Issue teams shall be composed of field experts from the Departmental bureaus represented on the Committee which have a specific jurisdiction, special

expertise or bona fide interest in the issue. The experts shall obtain approval from their respective supervisors as appropriate. The Committee may invite representation from other Federal agencies, Indian Nations, State and/or local governments, and NGOs it finds to be affected by or which may have an impact on the issue.

The Committee shall designate a chairperson and alternate for each special issue team it establishes. It shall be the responsibility of that issue team chairperson to establish schedules, agendas, and activities to meet the goals and objectives established by the Committee for resolution of the issue.

The Committee will define in specific terms each issue to be addressed, identify goals and objectives for each issue team, establish parameters for each issue analysis/study, identify the audience for whom the conclusions/recommendations will be intended, and establish a general timeframe for interim and final report submissions.

B. Examples of issues or issues related to a geographic area that could be addressed by an issue team are:

- El Paso/Juarez Area
- Training (coordination of DOI bureau initiatives with Mexican counterparts)
- U.S./Mexico Border Mapping Needs
- Lower Rio Grande Valley (Amistad International Dam to the Gulf of Mexico)
- Gulf/Laguna Madre
- Sonoran Desert Alliance
- Chihuahua
- San Pedro River (water rights issues)

Article III: Additional Terms

- A. Cooperation with other Government entities:** The Committee will work with other government and private entities, as necessary or desirable, in ways that will help facilitate the purpose of the Committee.
- B. Financial and Administrative Support:** The Committee will be self-supporting.
- C. Activities of the Committee:** All activities conducted under this Charter shall be subject to applicable Federal laws, agency regulations, and availability of staff and funding.
- D. Property Utilization:** Any property acquired or utilized under this Charter shall remain the property of the acquiring bureau unless otherwise specified by written agreement among the parties.
- E. Termination:** This Charter shall remain in effect indefinitely. Its effective date shall be the date of the last approving signature. Any bureau may terminate its participation in this Charter at any time by providing ninety (90) days written notice to the other bureaus. Termination of participation in this Charter by individual bureaus shall not constitute termination of the Charter among the remaining bureaus.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, this Charter will be executed in counterparts with the effective date being that of last Bureau/Office signature. A copy of all original executed signature pages affixed shall constitute the original Charter.

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Authorized Official: Ada E. Deer
 Title: Assistant Secretary
 Date: 8-11-94

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Authorized Official: Alan P. Munn
 Title: Deputy Director
 Date: 8/11/94

BUREAU OF MINES

Authorized Official: H. Coover
 Title: Acting Director
 Date: 8/11/94

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Authorized Official: J. G. Bunde
 Title: Acting Commissioner
 Date: Aug 11, 1994

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Authorized Official: Russell J. Earnest
 Title: Acting Director
 Date: 11 August 1994

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Authorized Official: Bennett G. McHugh

Title: Associate Director

Date: 8/11/94

MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE

Authorized Official: Parvata U Kallau

Title: Acting Deputy Director

Date: 11 August 1994

NATIONAL BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

Authorized Official: J. Eugene Hester

Title: Deputy Director

Date: August 10, 1994

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Authorized Official: John Reynolds

Title: Deputy Director

Date: 8/10/94



As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.